

# They Succeed: Exploring the Academic Success of Undergraduate Black Males at the University of Dayton

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## Abstract

Factors were explored related to African American male students' identities and how these subsequently influenced their academic achievement. Among the several findings, familial support, campus resources, and the desire to do "better" were top influences in these participants' achievement of academic success. Common among the findings was extracurricular involvement; this trend appeared as a high influence for many of the participants.

## Methodology

This was a qualitative phenomenological study that included individual interviews of nine undergraduate African American male students at the University of Dayton.

**"The more diverse the campus becomes we're on the borderline for real change."**

-Black Male Student Participant

## Recommendations for Practice

- Academic and co-curricular support outlets on campus are necessary for Black male students and are also key to building their academic and social confidence.
- Encouraging goal setting and career preparation can keep students motivated.
- Access and preparation, and early college aspirations lay a beneficial foundation for Black male students.

## Theme 1

Recent adversities directly and indirectly affecting the participants were most salient to their identity as a Black male.

## Theme 2

College aspirations were always present and were heavily influenced by family.

## Theme 3

The Office of Multicultural Affairs and academic programs for underrepresented students were vital to their academic success.

## Theme 4

Involvement in minority, multicultural, or Black organizations (including fraternities) was a large component of the Black male experience and increased the participants' confidence and leadership ability academically and socially.

## Theme 5

Hard work and time management were attributed to their achieved academic success.

## Theme 6

Professional aspirations and goals were a top motivator in their persistence.

## Theme 7

Academic success was defined as working hard and putting forth maximum effort, rather than achieving a high GPA.

## Theme 8

Continuous self-evaluation and balancing academic, co-curricular, and social experiences were attributed to maintained academic success.

**"I think there comes a time and a place where we can overcome those burdens but we have to have support and help, especially as African Americans."**

-Black Male Student Participant



## Select References

Anumba, E. (2015). Successfully navigating through college: Voices of African American males. *International Journal of Teacher Leadership*, 6(1), 35-56.

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